

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memorandum

April 6, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Steven Parr
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **H.R. 2991 (Rep. Lloyd Smucker)**, To establish the Susquehanna National Heritage Area in the State of Pennsylvania, and for other purposes.
April 11, 2018, 2:00 PM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 2991 “Susquehanna National Heritage Area Act”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 2991, introduced by Representative Lloyd Smucker (R-PA-16), establishes the Susquehanna National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania, designates the Susquehanna Heritage Corporation (Corporation) as the local coordinating entity for the area, and requires the Corporation to prepare and submit a management plan for the area.

Cosponsors

[17 Cosponsors](#)

Witnesses

The Honorable Leo S. Lutz
Mayor
Borough of Columbia
Columbia, PA

Background

National Heritage Areas are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Unlike national parks, National Heritage Areas are not federally owned or directly managed but have local control. A local management entity collaborates with the affected communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interest and needs. There are currently 49 National Heritage Areas in 32 States.¹

¹ <https://www.nps/subjects/heritageareas/index.htm>

H.R. 2991 proposes a new Susquehanna National Heritage Area, encompassing both Lancaster and York Counties in South Central Pennsylvania. The area currently holds a State designation as a Pennsylvania Heritage Area.² Some have raised concerns that national heritage designations could impact private property or water rights.

The Susquehanna Heritage Corporation is a local non-profit organization focused on the Susquehanna River and the communities and landscapes along the River in Lancaster and York Counties. It is part of Heritage PA, a network of State-designated Pennsylvania Heritage Areas. The Corporation advocates for local involvement in the area and since 2001 has helped raise over \$18 million for the current State heritage area through local support, State and federal grants, and private donations.³

Named after the Susquhannock, an Iroquoian tribe that lived along the river, the Susquehanna River is approximately 444 miles long, making it the longest river on the American east coast and the 16th longest river in the United States. The River flows from upstate New York to the Chesapeake Bay passing along both Lancaster and York Counties in Pennsylvania. The Susquehanna is broad and shallow with an average daily flow of 22 billion gallons of water making it ideal for boating and fishing.⁴

Formed in 1729 after residents petitioned for a new county, Lancaster became the fourth county in Pennsylvania. Located along the Susquehanna River, Lancaster County quickly prospered and served as the State capitol from 1799 to 1812.⁵ Today, the County is a tourist destination featuring Pennsylvania Dutch Country museums, outdoor activities, authentic Amish experiences, and a historic downtown.⁶

York County was founded in 1749 after being deeded to Pennsylvania by the American Indians who inhabited the area. Since its founding, many residents of the County played significant roles in the American Revolution and the Civil War. Following the American Revolution, York County was primarily an agricultural community and served as a place for continued industrialization as the coal-burning locomotive was perfected in York County.⁷

H.R. 2991 would establish the Susquehanna National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania and designate the Susquehanna Heritage Corporation as the local coordinating entity for the area.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

² “Facts and Figures” Heritage PA. <http://www.heritagepa.com/facts-and-figures/>

³ “Who We Are” Susquehanna Heritage. <http://www.susquehannaheritage.org/about-us/mission-vision/>

⁴ “The Susquehanna River” Visit Ventral PA. <http://www.visitcentralpa.org/things-to-do/the-susquehanna-river>

⁵ “Lancaster History” Lancaster County Pennsylvania. <https://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/195/Lancaster-History>

⁶ “Things to Do” Discover Lancaster. <http://www.discoverlancaster.com/activities/index.asp>

⁷ “York County History” York County Pennsylvania. <https://yorkcountypa.gov/about-york-county/york-county-history.html>

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.